

Moran Announces Veterinary Medicine

Loan Repayment Program

Program Benefits Rural Veterinarians in Kansas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Jerry Moran announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is now accepting applications from veterinarians wishing to participate in the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP). This program addresses veterinary shortages in rural America by repaying the student loans of qualified veterinarians in return for their services in areas suffering from a lack of veterinarians.

"It is good news that USDA is finally taking applications for this long awaited program. In Kansas, access to veterinary services is critical to ensuring a safe food supply and to allowing ranchers to maintain a profitable livestock operation," said Moran. "I am pleased this program will help bring young veterinarians to rural under-served areas in Kansas."

The VMLRP was originally passed by Congress in 2003, but was not implemented because of delays at USDA. Moran helped insert a provision into the 2008 Farm Bill that corrected the delays and set a time table for implementing the program.

In return for a commitment of three years of veterinary services in a designated veterinary shortage area, NIFA may repay up to \$25,000 of student loan debt per year. Loan repayment benefits are limited to payments of the principal and interest on government and commercial loans received for the attendance at an accredited college of veterinary medicine resulting in a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or the equivalent. NIFA applications will be due June 30, 2010, and offers will be made by Sept. 30, 2010. NIFA will host three interactive webinars for applicants on May 4, 2010 at 4 p.m., and May 12, 2010 at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Application forms and webinar instructions can be found on the NIFA website: www.nifa.usda.gov.

Major studies indicate significant and growing shortages of food supply veterinarians and veterinarians serving in certain other high priority specialty areas. A leading cause for this shortage is the heavy cost of four years of professional veterinary medical training, which can average between \$130,000 and \$140,000. Congress established the VMLRP as a way to remedy this growing need. For more information, please visit www.nifa.usda.gov.

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